

Town Hall Questions from 15 October 2009

1. Watching GEN Odierno's speech a few weeks ago, he said that the number in Iraq would be frozen for 60 days after the election. Does this mean there is also an impending decision to extend 1BCT?

A: At this time, 1BCT is not being considered for an extension. Even at the higher level planning meetings, it is not discussed, so we expect them to be home as scheduled.

2. We have been told there will be no \$1000 extension payment for the extension. Are there any plans for the Division to seek a reinstatement of that policy for pay?

A: Congress has not yet approved the budget and the policy of awarding soldiers that stayed deployed past 365 days expired at the end of August. We have gone back to higher to ask for the additional dollars for our soldiers but do not yet know if it will be approved.

3. Do you plan to continue the III Corps Family First Policy of no work on weekends and release Thursdays at 1500 once the units return from block leave?

A: Yes, I do. We will take a common sense approach and allow commanders to make specific decisions based on training needs. What we want to reinforce is predictability for Soldiers and Families, so we will put Family First schedules on the published unit training schedules.

4. Are soldiers there being infected with H1N1 flu? How many soldiers have been identified as contracting the flu?

A: Several 1CD Soldiers have been diagnosed with H1N1 symptoms, but because we are very alert to them, we've caught all of the cases early and the Soldiers have been treated.

5. Is there any update on what was done to the soldier involved in the shooting at the mental health clinic at Camp Liberty several months ago?

A: The short answer is no. That investigation is ongoing by the authorities here and we're not at liberty to discuss.

6. My husband has been told he can't ship back the TV and bike he bought in Iraq with his other military equipment and that he has to pay shipping through the USPS. Is there any way soldiers can send back their personal equipment?

A: As much as we would like to let them, transporting personal items like televisions and bicycles is not authorized with official government equipment. If Soldiers have any of these items and want to keep them, they need to mail them back Stateside.

7. Can you explain how the soldiers will depart Iraq? Will they be able to call us and tell us when they arrive?

A: Soldiers will have several opportunities to contact loved ones at home once they leave Iraq for Kuwait. Depending on the Soldier's mission, he might be in Kuwait for a couple of weeks to only a few days. Much of that has to do with the preparing equipment for loading onto ships for

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redeployment. For example, a tank driver has to spend more time cleaning his tank than a communications Soldier has to spend time cleaning radio equipment. The camps in Kuwait are set up with phones and internet cafes that will allow Soldiers the opportunity to contact home before climbing aboard an airplane.

8. Given block leave is so close to Spring Break for the schools, will our soldiers be able to take block leave during Spring Break?

A: Leave is at the discretion of the unit commander based on unit schedules. You'll need to contact your Soldier's unit's rear detachment for what their commander is giving out for Spring Break Leave guidance.

9. Did VP Biden visit any 1CD soldiers when he was last in Baghdad?

A: VP Biden did visit with 1CD Soldiers during his trip here. As you would expect he was impressed with the caliber of Troopers in the First Team.

10. What can we expect for 3BCT's dwell time before their next deployment?

A: The situation is fluid and there are still high level decisions to be made, but you can expect a 15 to 18 month dwell for the Brigade.

11. Does the extension apply to the 1CD Band and will the Band still get block leave considering their mission of playing for troops when they return?

A: Yes, the extension applies to the 1CD Band, however, there are enough Soldiers on the Rear Detachment Band to cover down on events. We expect those band members who deployed to have the same leave as the rest of the DSTB.

12. Will the brigades or battalions be returning home together at the same time?

A: For the most part, yes, they will.

13. When is it a good time to start telling out-of-town people to start getting flight and hotel reservations?

A: The Rear Detachment receives the official flight manifest upon departure from Kuwait which is really only about 18 hours out from touch down at Fort Hood. Obviously this is not enough time to schedule flights and book hotels. Your Soldier will have a general idea of when he'll be coming home once he arrives in Kuwait.

14. Will the Division have a countdown to when the Soldiers are coming home on the website?

A: No, we won't. We have three brigades and the headquarters battalion worth of Soldiers redeploying from November into February. We would have too many countdowns to count!

15. What about homecoming decorations?

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A: You are encouraged to post welcome home decorations along the route the bus will take from the airfield to Cooper Parade Field. See the briefing slides from the Town Hall for the route. Additionally, we'll have orange construction fencing in place on the Parade Field for you to hang decorations.

16. Are our Soldiers redeploying to Iraq or Afghanistan next deployment?

A: The 1CD is focused on the Iraq mission and do not anticipate deploying to Afghanistan at this time.

17. Can spouses reserve guest housing on post for visiting family members?

A: Yes, but on a limited basis. You can call 254-532-5157 for more information and details.

18. Since the ACB deployed so much later than everyone else, will they still get the same homecoming as the other brigades?

A: Yes, they will. The 1st Cavalry Division set the standard for Welcome Home Ceremonies when we redeployed from OIF II back in 2005. We were the first to get out of the gymnasiums and use our parade field. We've held on to this standard through two deployments and it will not change. The focus of the 1CD Welcome Home Ceremonies is on that moment when the Troopers cross the field and the Commander tells their friends and families, to "Charge!" We do not add special escorts, fire trucks, helicopters or other events as part of the ceremony. Each of our returning Troopers receives the same ceremony, with all of the style and pride of the First Team. What you saw 4BCT receive four months ago will what you'll see with the other brigades and what you'll see with the ACB.